

## Strautmann struts its stuff

Having made more than 200 big square bales of high-quality hay which were increasingly difficult to sell at an acceptable price this summer, Devon dairy farmer Alan Quick decided the forage value would be better incorporated into rations for his 105-cow dairy herd.

Mr Quick, of H.T. Quick and Sons, farms the 111-hectare Rull Green Farm, near Cullompton, with his parents Henry and Mary.

He says: "We needed to work out the best way to process the bales. Our 14-year-old horizontal mixer had been superb and totally reliable, but it was unable to process hay. The only option was to update our feeder."

The farm first moved to a total mixed ration-style feed in 2007, and with feed advice from Crediton Milling, gradually raised the herd average to 7,000 litres, representing a 1,500-litre increase over simply feeding silage direct from the clamp.

Mr Quick says: "We have focused on milk production since 2007 and have continued to push both milk quality and forage quality to increase efficiency and profitability. With more roughage and fibre in the herd's diet, we stood to improve cow health and yield from our British Holstein Friesian cross herd."

Local dealer Halse of Honiton put a Strautmann Verti Mix 1651 model on-farm for demonstration and, after just two days, the Quick family realised it was the machine for them.

### Ration mixing

Mr Quick says: "The ration was mixed more gently. It looked lighter, looser and more appealing."

"The cows just cleared it up, without sorting it through. Our older



Fitted with a bale processing kit, H.T. Quick and Sons' Strautmann Verti Mix 1651 is helping to make use of high quality hay and boosting milk yields.

machine could easily over-process the feed if you did not keep an eye on it and that could cost us as the cows would drop a bit of yield."

He says the Strautmann Verti Mix is a logical step forward at Rull Green Farm.

He says: "Being a single vertical auger means a more compact feeder and it is about three foot shorter than our old model. It is easier and more manoeuvrable around our buildings – the same 120hp MFG465

tractor handles it comfortably – and it can hold up to 4.5 tonnes of feed."

"It does not matter how much you mix, it creates a consistent mix with every load."

He says the mixer's ability to handle varied feedstock also lends itself to different chop length with silages.

Mr Quick says: "Knowing the mixer wagon can deal with different length forage means we are not committed to a precision chop forager for every cut. So with a lighter third cut, for example,

we could switch to a contractor's forage wagon service, giving us a cost-savings with those lighter, thin crops."

### Overnight feed

Since arriving on-farm in August, the Strautmann has been processing about 3.5t/day for the farm as an overnight feed, to supplement daytime grazing for cows in-milk. The herd is on a year-round calving plan and the farm makes full use of its grass crop by grazing as much as possible.

Mr Quick says: "We still supplement the herd's intake with a ration every night."

Machine specification includes tub magnets, wide tyres, heavy-duty auger, cross-conveyor and two-speed gearbox.

He says: "I carry out all the mixing and feeding and it is very easy to weigh-in the ingredients. With a ration which includes grass and maize silage, plus straw, rolled wheat and a small quantity of blend, we have started to see a daily increase of one litre per cow in the first three months with the Strautmann."

"When the herd is fully housed for winter and the full effect of a daily ration takes effect, I am expecting to see a two-litre increase. And that extra 200 litres/day will soon help to pay off the feeder."



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